

No. 5470^a 48



GIVEN BY

H. H. Kimball Esq.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

5490^a 48

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE ROWE STREET MEETING-HOUSE ON SABBATH
MORNING, NOVEMBER 28, 1847.

BY

NEHEMIAH ADAMS,

PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON:

GOULD, KENDALL AND LINCOLN,

59 WASHINGTON STREET,

1848.

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Receipt. Oct. 28, 1865.
H. B. Kimball, Esq

BOSTON:

DICKINSON PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.....DAMRELL & MOORE,

No. 52 Washington Street.

BOSTON, December 6, 1847.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

The Rowe Street Baptist Church, at a meeting held on the 30th ult., by a unanimous vote, appointed the undersigned a committee to request of you, for publication, a copy of the Sermon preached by you in the Rowe Street Meeting-House, on the morning of the Lord's day, November 28th.

The members of the Church, in taking this measure, were actuated by a desire to read for their own benefit a discourse to the delivery of which they listened with such peculiar interest, and by a belief that its circulation would do good to others.

The undersigned take pleasure in performing the duty assigned them, and hope you will be willing to furnish them with a copy for the press.

With great respect and regard, Your obedient servants,

RICHARD FLETCHER,
HEMAN LINCOLN,
CHARLES D. GOULD,
RICHARD E. EDDY.

Rev. N. ADAMS, D.D.

BOSTON, December 10, 1847.

To the Committee of the Rowe Street Baptist Church:

DEAR BRETHREN,

The Sermon to which you refer was preached to my own Congregation several months since, in the ordinary course of ministerial duty. Being requested late on Sabbath morning, the 28th ult., to officiate at your place of worship, in the failure of the expected supply of your pulpit, I had but a short time to select a subject, and was influenced in my choice only by the common interest which the theme of salvation by Christ inspires. As you are pleased to think that the Sermon may be useful in print, I yield my private inclination to your judgment and wishes.

With great respect and Christian affection, Most truly yours,

N. ADAMS.

HON. RICHARD FLETCHER,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
HON. HEMAN LINCOLN,		
CHARLES D. GOULD, Esq.,		
RICHARD E. EDDY, Esq.,		

S E R M O N .

JOHN 9: 35.

DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD ?

OUR future, endless welfare is involved in the answer to this question. Such passages as these declare it: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

These words of Scripture bring to view the well-known fact, that believing on Christ is set forth in the Bible as the way, and the only way, to be saved.

Though this fact is so clearly revealed, it is surprising to find how much ignorance there is on this point, even in some who have been well instructed.

Many, when asked what they depend upon for salvation, say, The mercy of God ; others, We must give ourselves to God ; others, We must pray to God, and do what is right ; while others, without attaching any definite meaning to the words, will say, We must believe on Christ. On that most important point of christian truth, which involves our condition for eternity, upon which a mistake may be fatal, and without a right knowledge of which, as the centre of christian truth, the knowledge of all other religious truths is defective, there is perhaps more vagueness of feeling than on any other important subject. I propose the question of the Saviour in the text, that we may ascertain whether we have done that which alone is necessary, and which is indispensable, in order to be saved. I put it, therefore, to each of you : “ Dost thou believe on the Son of God ? ”

The answer which some will make, discloses my object in this discourse. They will say, We earnestly desire to know whether we do believe on him or not. This, for substance, is the answer which the man, whom the Saviour had just cured of blindness, made to the question in the text. “ And he answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him ? ”

There are so many in every christian assembly who are ready and indeed desirous to be instructed on this point, that I feel inclined to speak as though they were assembled by themselves, to hear the subject explained. Let me suppose you to be a company of inquirers, on the subject of your personal salvation. The point of

inquiry may be thus stated: I am told in the Bible that, in order to be saved, I must believe on Christ. What is it to believe on Christ? And how may I know whether I do believe on Christ?

To remove some erroneous impressions, and so prepare the way for the truth to be seen more clearly, in contrast with erroneous views on this subject, let me say, before proceeding further, that believing on Christ *is not a mere belief of what is called his mission, or of his being divinely commissioned.*

The acknowledgment of this does not necessarily imply an entirely right state of heart, inasmuch as wicked men believe this. Even the devils confessed the Messiahship of Christ. "I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." "Hold thy peace, and come out of him," was the Saviour's answer to this confession of faith by a malignant spirit who had possession of a man.

To believe that Christ came into the world, and that he did and said the things which are recorded of him, no more implies a right state of heart, than to believe that Moses, Isaiah, and Paul lived, and did the things which are recorded of them.

Neither does faith in Christ consist in the mere belief *that he died for us, and is willing to save us.*

All this, with the preceding, it is, of course, necessary to believe; and to one who thus believes it may be said, as the apostle James says to him who believes that there is one God: "Thou doest well." But many have believed that Christ died for them, who, by their

own confession, have never believed any thing further with regard to him. Many have been convinced that he was willing to save them, and have gone so far as to believe that he would save them, who have never given scriptural evidence of believing in Christ, as the Bible requires, in order to be saved.

I. I SHALL NOW ENDEAVOR TO SHOW WHAT IT IS TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST SO AS TO BE SAVED.

The Bible teaches us, that the sufferings and death of Christ were appointed as a substitute for the future and endless sufferings of the race, all of whom may avail themselves of this substitution on certain conditions. Future endless punishment is declared to be the penalty of sin, and every one who does not accept the offered substitution must perish. In illustration of this, it is sufficient to call to mind such passages as teach that Christ "was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed;" that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" that Christ "gave his life a ransom for many;" that God hath set him "forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood;" "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" that "he died for all," "was made a curse for us," and has "delivered us from the wrath to come."

Such being the object and the effect of Christ's death in our behalf, it follows, that believing on him must

consist in availing ourselves, in some way, of his sufferings and death. To believe on Christ as a Saviour is, in some way, to do that which makes his sufferings and death come in the place of our future punishment, so as to release us from it. For, believing on Christ is represented in the Bible as reconciling us to God, making it possible for God to "be just, and to justify him that believeth in Jesus," so that there is "no condemnation" for a believer. Hence, that believing in Christ which saves the soul, may be said to be relying on the sufferings and death of Christ, who, by them, has redeemed us from condemnation and punishment.

But there is one thing which it is of the utmost importance to remember in this connection. No one ever believes in Christ as a Saviour, without feeling the need of him as such. Men may believe, with any state of mind, in his having come into the world; or that he is a great teacher; or that he was a martyr to truth. But to believe on Christ so as to save the soul, we must feel that we need such an atoning Saviour as Christ. And we must feel that we shall perish, unless we avail ourselves of his sufferings and death. Christ illustrates this, when he says: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Every candid reader of the Bible must perceive that the gospel is a remedial system. We do not avail ourselves of the remedy till we feel our need of it.

I shall succeed best in conveying to many minds what it is to believe on Christ so as to be saved, by

giving some examples, to show how men generally feel in the act of believing on Christ. Were I to quote one example only, I should, in some respect, mislead you ; for the impression would be, that this one case is a pattern by which all must shape the exercises of their minds. Whereas, men are led to believe in Christ by different means, and through different states of mind ; and while, in the act of giving themselves up to Christ, to be saved by his sufferings and death, they feel substantially alike, they differ widely in many of the preceding and in some of the attending feelings. This will appear as we proceed.

The first illustration of believing on Christ will be taken from Doddridge's " Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul ;" from the chapter, " Salvation, how obtained." As preparatory to it, the author makes the following important remarks, which illustrate what has been said above respecting the necessity of feeling our need of such a Saviour as Christ, before we can believe on him. Doddridge says :—

" Be assured, you must not apply to God in the neglect of a mediator. It will be neither acceptable nor safe for you to rush into his presence, without any regard to his Son, whom he hath appointed to introduce sinners to him. And if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a sinner. The very manner of presenting the address, will be interpreted as a denial of that guilt with which he knows you are chargeable ; and therefore he will not admit you, nor so much as look upon you. And accordingly our

Lord, knowing how much every man living was concerned in this, says, in the most universal terms: ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by me.’”

It may be useful to observe here, that some will see in these remarks the reason why they have so long prayed in vain that they may be converted and saved. They have had no regard, in their request, to the fact that, as sinners against God, they have no claim upon him for the least favor, and, on the contrary, deserve nothing but punishment. Their prayers have implied no confession of guilt, no submission of themselves to God’s justice, in view of it. They have merely felt unhappy; they should feel that they are guilty and condemned, and, with this conviction, submit themselves into the hands of God, praying to be forgiven on the ground of what Christ has done and suffered for them. But many approach God, when they feel their need of salvation, with the prayer that he will make them christians so that they need not perish. They complain to others, that, while they are entirely willing to be christians, God withholds his grace from them. The whole difficulty lies here: They do not come to God in their proper character, as sinners, deserving eternal death. They ask for a blessing; not for mercy. God can do nothing effectual for their salvation, however, without bestowing mercy upon them. To obtain mercy, they must come as condemned, perishing sinners, and ask to be pardoned because Christ has died in their stead. This is coming to God, as Doddridge describes it, by a mediator.

This, we believe, is what Christ intended when he said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Now, to show the feelings which accompany that faith in Christ which saves the soul, I quote the following illustration from Doddridge, to which I have already referred:—

"Apply, therefore, to this glorious Redeemer, amiable as he will appear to every believing eye, in the blood which he shed upon the cross. Go to him, O sinner, this day, this moment, with all thy sins about thee. Go just as thou art; for if thou wilt never apply to him till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all. Go to him just as thou art; and say to him, Blessed Jesus, I am surely one of the most sinful and one of the most miserable creatures that ever fell prostrate before thee; nevertheless, I come, because thou didst once say, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' I am a condemned, miserable sinner; I have ruined my own soul; and am condemned for ever, if thou dost not help and save me. I am, even at this very moment, under a sentence of everlasting destruction; a destruction which will be aggravated by all the contempt which I have cast upon thee, O thou bleeding Lamb of God; for I have most basely and ungratefully wronged thee under the character of a Saviour as well as of a Lord. But now, I am willing to submit to thee; and I have brought my poor, trembling soul to lodge it in thy hands, if thou

wilt condescend to receive it ; and if thou wilt not, I must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy feet ; stretch out thy golden sceptre, that I may live. ‘Yea, if it please the king, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition.’ I have no treasure wherewith to purchase it ; I have no equivalent to give thee for it ; but if that compassionate heart of thine can find a pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayest find here. O Lord, I have foolishly attempted to be my own Saviour, but it will not do. On thee do I desire to fix my anchor, and build my eternal hopes. To thy teachings would I submit ; be thy doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that thou thyself hast said it. To thine atonement, obedience, and intercession, O thou holy and ever acceptable High Priest, would I trust ; and to thy government, O thou exalted Sovereign, would I yield a willing, delightful subjection. I admit thee, O my Saviour, to the throne in my heart. Ascend it, and reign there for ever !”

Of the tens of thousands who have read the excellent book from which these words are taken, many, anxiously seeking for peace with God, have made this confession and prayer their own, and the result has been all which they desired. The feelings here expressed involve scriptural faith in Christ as a Saviour ; and, if proved by the subsequent life to be sincere, they constitute what is meant by believing on the Son of God.

To show how different minds are brought to the same point through different frames of feeling, I quote

from President Edwards' Narrative of his Conversion : —

“The first instance which I remember of that inward, sweet delight in God, which I have lived much in since, was on reading these words: ‘Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen.’ As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was, as it were, diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I had before experienced. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven, and be, as it were, swallowed up in him for ever. I kept saying, and, as it were, singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought that there was any thing spiritual or saving in this.

“*From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him.* An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excel-

lency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me as those which treated on these subjects. Those words used to be abundantly with me, I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valley. The words seemed to me greatly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ."

These words are interesting, as describing the religious feelings of a man confessedly as great a metaphysician as ever lived, and whose religious works show an extensive acquaintance with the human heart and mind in religious exercises. In his case, love seems to have prevailed and led his thoughts to Christ; the way of salvation by a Redeemer presented itself to him with such beauty and glory, that he seems to have been swallowed up in delight and joy while he accepted such a Saviour as he perceived Christ to be.

But how was it with the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, when he believed on Christ? We might suppose that the man whose book has guided more souls to Christ and heaven than any other uninspired book, would have had some peculiarly interesting exercises of mind in believing on Christ. We have the account of it by his own hand. Though, like the illustration of faith contained in the passage from Doddridge, a sense of guilt led his soul to Christ, it differs from that illustration, in the fact that no such deliberate, intelligent act of submission to Christ preceded his faith and hope, but there was an immediate disclosure to him, under a sense of guilt, of the ability

and willingness of Christ to save sinners. Bunyan says: —

“ I remember that one day, as I was travelling into the country, and musing on the wickedness and blasphemy of my heart, and considering the enmity that was in me to God, that Scripture came into my mind, ‘ He hath made peace, through the blood of his cross.’ By which I was made to see, both again and again, that day, that God and my soul were friends by his blood ; yea, I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other through his blood. This was a good day to me. I hope I shall never forget it.

“ At another time, as I sat by the fire in my house, musing on my wretchedness, the Lord made that also a precious word unto me: ‘ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.’ I thought that the glory of these words was then so weighty on me, that I was both once and twice ready to swoon, as I sat ; yet not with grief and trouble, but with solid peace and joy.”

Some may say, In the last two cases, there seems to have been a disclosure made to the mind by the grace of God, without effort on the part of the individuals ; — how may we obtain such grace ? I answer, The disclosure of Christ, as an all-sufficient Redeemer, was

made to these men while they were conscious of their perishing condition as sinners, and, with entire submission to God, were seeking to be reconciled to him. To those who seek with such a sense of helplessness, and with such submission to God, the promise will be fulfilled, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But if, while destitute of this, we ask for spiritual blessings, merely because we know that we shall perish without them, and do not submit ourselves as sinners into the hands of a righteous God, we do not understand what it is to believe on Christ; and we are not prepared, by any proper sense of our condition as perishing sinners, to believe on him.

Much trouble is felt by many, because they have never obtained, as they say, that conviction of sin which, in a certain form, or degree, they suppose to be a pre-requisite to faith in Christ. Because they have not experienced this conviction of sin, they think that they are not qualified to believe in Christ.

There is great error in this. Some feel that there is a kind of merit in this state of mind, which constitutes a claim on the mercy of God; and others, that God withholds his grace till they are able to obtain this conviction of sin. But nothing is more various than conviction of sin. With some, it is an apprehension of divine judgment against them for their sins, as expressed by Doddridge. With others, it is a consciousness of inward pollution, as in the case of Bunyan. With others, it is simply a feeling of help-

lessness and need, expressed by the Saviour's words, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." With others, it is self-reproach and sorrow because, as they say, they cannot feel their guilt. To some, the way of salvation by Christ, as illustrating the infinite love of God, appears so glorious, and excites such feelings of confidence and love, that they believe in Christ without having had any harrowing convictions of guilt; but in such cases, repentance for sin, though not recognized under that name, is frequently as genuine and thorough as in cases of protracted mental suffering. Conviction of sin cannot save us. To be of any value, it must lead us to Christ. But so long as we believe in Christ, it matters little through what states of mind we pass to do it. Most people have a pattern of conversion before their minds, to which they suppose their feelings must conform. This pattern is derived from the experience of others, as described in books, or conversation. But the way to be saved is, through a crucified Redeemer, without merits of our own; if, in any state of mind, you believe on this Redeemer, you are justified. You need not be careful through what previous exercises of mind you pass in coming to Christ; only come to him, and you will be saved. The ways of approach to Christ are many; like the ways of access to his presence in heaven through those walls which have "on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates." There is no prescribed state of mind through which men pass

to believe on Christ. Any state of mind which implies a conscious need of a Saviour, prepares us to believe in him.

The reliance on Christ, such as the authors above quoted described, in connection with differing exercises of mind, is what the Scriptures call faith in Christ, believing in Christ; and this faith saves the soul, instead of that obedience to God, which, if it had been perfect, would have been in the place of a Saviour. Angels in heaven need no Saviour. They, like the elder son in the parable, though in a better and more perfect sense, may say, "Lo, these many years have we served thee, neither transgressed we at any time thy commandment." In the place of perfect obedience, which satisfies the demands of justice, the righteousness of Christ, without the law, is provided for us, constituted by his sufferings and death in our behalf. "Christ died for the ungodly;" his soul was made "an offering for sin;" he "hath redeemed us to God by his blood." Now, the plan of human salvation is simply this. By trusting in the sufferings and death of his Saviour a sinner will be forgiven, and he will finally be treated as though he had never sinned. Accepting Christ as an atoning Saviour, comes in the place of perfectly obeying the law of God. This is what is meant when the Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are "justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

He that believeth "shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

If it is now made plain what it is to believe on Christ, you are prepared to consider the question in the text, in its personal application to you: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

II. To help you in answering this question, I WILL MENTION SOME SIGNS BY WHICH WE MAY KNOW WHETHER WE BELIEVE ON CHRIST.

1. If we believe on Christ, in the sense now explained, we cannot but feel a degree of personal love and attachment to him.

Believing on Christ, as already shown, implies that we feel ourselves to be in a lost and ruined condition, and that without Christ we must perish. We then give ourselves up to him, to be saved by his sufferings and death. Then we see how he suffered for us, how he has delivered us from the wrath to come, how he has procured heaven for us; this too, while we were enemies to him; and, therefore, that his love towards us was generous and free. This being the case, no one can truly believe on Christ without some degree of love to him. Yet the prevailing feeling in one who loves Christ, and really believes on him, may be, that his love is weak and insufficient, since the love of Christ towards him is infinitely great and affecting. In some cases, this love takes the form of peaceful, quiet complacency, as in the case of Edwards; in others, it rises to great ardor; but in all cases of true faith in

Christ, there is a degree of love to the Saviour and friend from whom the soul receives such infinite favors.

2. Another sign of believing on Christ, is a feeling of devotedness to him. There springs up in the mind of one who feels that he has been redeemed and forgiven, a desire to serve and honor Christ; a feeling that he is not his own, but is bought with a price; that it will be wrong and unworthy to seek his own happiness as his chief good. The first emotion of the converted Saul of Tarsus, seems to have been a feeling of entire submission and devotedness to Christ: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

3. In believing on Christ, there is a degree of peace of mind and sense of safety.

In our efforts to be accepted of God through our own goodness or works, we have this feeling, How may I know when I have done enough? The conscience is never satisfied with our own endeavors after moral goodness, when we are convinced of sin. But when we have put our trust in the infinite righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, the state of mind produced by it is well expressed in these words of Watts: —

"Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered his blood and died;
*My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside."*

This truth is declared in these words of Scripture: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO SHOW, VERY BRIEFLY, THE REASONS WHY MANY WHO HEAR THE GOSPEL DO NOT BELIEVE ON CHRIST.

1. It is owing, in some, to an entire want of conviction of sin. They feel no need of a suffering, atoning Saviour. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." If provision has been made for the pardon of sin, by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and if sin can be pardoned in no other way, our guilt and danger, as sinners, must be extreme. It becomes us to understand our condition, and avail ourselves of the remedy, ere it be too late.

2. Some feel their guilt, but they do not understand what they must do to be saved. To these I have endeavored to speak in this discourse. Many remain in a distressed state of mind for a long time, because they do not perceive just what they must do in order to be saved. I speak the experience of many when I say, that had we sought, in early life, to have the way of salvation familiarly explained to us, we might have been saved years of mental suffering. Let parents and Sabbath-school teachers ascertain whether there

be not some of their children who long to know precisely what it is to believe on Christ. Wearied by mere exhortations, repelled by stereotyped phrases, perhaps they feel that the way to be saved is a mystery incapable of solution; and that the disclosure of it is to be waited for inactively; as men, for example, wait for fair weather, or rain. In explaining it to them, nothing, as experience and observation show, is more necessary than to illustrate the fact, that Christ, as a Saviour, is believed in to salvation only by those who, in some way, from a sense of ignorance, or helplessness, or guilt, feel their need of Christ as their atoning Redeemer.

3. But some do not believe on Christ, because this way of salvation is offensive to their pride. It requires them to feel that no natural or acquired goodness is sufficient to justify them before God. The thought that they are under condemnation, and, if saved, must accept of mere mercy, is revolting to them. They cannot acknowledge that they are so wicked in the sight of God as to have forfeited all claims upon his favor. They, therefore, see in an atoning Saviour nothing adapted to their feelings. The cross is a stumbling-block and foolishness to them. To others, however, who once felt as they do, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation. The following declaration of Scripture should be pondered by those who have just been described: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but to us who are saved, it is the power of God."

4. Some do not believe in Christ, because they are unwilling to make the effort and sacrifice which it requires.

It will require them to repent of their sins, and forsake them; to give up the world as the object of their supreme love; to live under the influence of spiritual things; to think of future retributions, and prepare for them; in short, to take up the cross and follow Christ, living a life of faith and prayer. They are persuaded that this is required of them, and that without it they cannot expect to be saved; but they defer their duty for the present; expecting that, if they should meet with affliction, or be sick, or infirm, or in some way incapacitated for what they now enjoy, they shall have an opportunity to become christians. Strange delusion, to think that to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ can make us less happy than the pursuit of earthly pleasure. Jesus never tasted any of the pleasures of sin; the redeemed, through eternity, will never taste them; are these pleasures necessary, therefore, to true happiness? To be owned and blessed as a child of God through Christ, surely can be no abridgment of human happiness.

5. A spirit of procrastination prevents many from believing on Christ. They need no argument to prove that they must have Christ for their personal friend and Saviour in order to be happy now, and at death, and to be saved. They say to us, when we preach these truths to them, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for

thee." Though Felix sent for Paul again, and often, it was because "he hoped that money should have been given him of Paul." Thus, in consequence of refusing to believe when convinced of his guilt and danger, a base motive was suffered to hinder his reception of the truth. His soul is at this moment somewhere in the universe of God, conscious and active as ever. Say, procrastinating spirit, in view of the past, present, and future, how you would act could you once more have salvation offered you by the preaching of Christ crucified! There are limits even to the mercy of God. While men say, Peace and safety, and look for a future opportunity to repent and believe, sudden destruction comes upon them, and they cannot escape.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" If you answer affirmatively, or, if your reply is, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief, then God and you are at peace. There is no condemnation for you. All your sins are blotted out. Pardon and divine favor are not to be looked for at a future time as though they had not yet been bestowed upon you. For justification is a finished work; a present, and not a future, act of grace. "I write unto you because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Believers are said in the Bible to be already saved. Their names are in the Lamb's book of life. "My sheep shall never perish, and no man shall pluck them out of my hands."

